

Help Desk / End-user Support

Why it's important to provide end-user support?

A help desk reduces downtime for IT services and functions to make systems available for maximum time. It is specially focused on end-user functionality, and, thus, is responsible for quick resolution of immediate needs, incidents and technical issues of end-users. An efficient help desk is an indispensable part of any IT organization and primarily aims to provide first contact resolution as swiftly and efficiently as possible. The benefits of an optimized help desk are; customer satisfaction, improvement of product quality, improvement of productivity, cost savings.

What to Consider

Help desks can be implemented with a simple group email supported by gmail or other free account. Help desk software can be implemented with elaborate software solutions. Here are some key questions to think about when getting started:

- How will users of the system or process know how to get help?
- Who is the audience for the help desk?
- What types of questions or information will users need help on? Is it just technologists or will help on the business practices be needed as well.
- Will there be frequently asked questions (FAQs) or some other documentation that can be used to self-help in known situations?
- Best practices allow a way to capture help requests so that they can be analyzed and self-help documentation or known fixes can be created for situations that arise often.
- Can support cases be placed in silos by topic? This allows support team members to be notified only in areas for which they are responsible.
- Does an email need to be sent to the user acknowledging their request?
- Can an email autoresponder with pertinent tips enable self-help?
- Is support via non-traditional means (e.g. social media) necessary for this audience?
- Are there key things that the person providing the help needs to know? How can these be easily captured or provided?
- What processes will be used and if there is a team providing help, are there clearly defined responsibilities for providing help.

Resources and Templates

Low cost systems for basic service

- [Freshdesk](#) - This cloud-based provider offers a free level of service for unlimited service agents. If needs surpass the base level, be prepared to pay at least \$19 per month per agent.
- Self-hosted help desk solutions - There are a number of free and open-source software solutions (such as [osTicket](#)) that can be employed.